

I claim:

1. A freeboard measuring device, comprising:
 - an elongated housing means having a means for water ingress formed in said housing means;
 - a means for freeboard measurement mounted, at least in part, within said elongated housing means; and
 - a stabilizing means secured above the housing means and extending transversely to a longitudinal axis of the housing means for stabilizing vertical orientation of said housing means.
2. The device of Claim 1, wherein said stabilizing means comprises at least one cross bar secured to an upper part of the housing means by a flexible connecting means.
3. The device of Claim 2, wherein said flexible connecting means comprises a pair of connectors attached equidistantly from central axes of said housing means and said at least one cross bar.
4. The device of Claim 3, wherein each of said connectors comprises a plurality of interlocking rings.
5. The device of Claim 2, wherein said stabilizing means further comprises a transverse bar secured above said at least one cross bar.
6. The device of Claim 5, further comprising a swivel connecting member securing central portions of said at least one cross bar and said transverse bar.
7. The device of Claim 6, wherein a flexible attachment member extends between respective ends of said at least one cross bar and said transverse bar for resisting wind and wave actions, while stabilizing position of the housing means.

8. The device of Claim 5, wherein said at least one cross bar has a longitudinal dimension substantially greater than the longitudinal dimension of the transverse bar.
9. The device of Claim 5, wherein said transverse bar is adapted for detachable engagement with a sounding tape.
10. The device of Claim 1, wherein said housing means comprises a central portion and a fin means securely attached along elongated sides of said central portion for streamlining said device in water without increasing its resistance to a water flow acting on the sides of the housing means.
11. The device of Claim 10, wherein said fin means extends along a bottom portion of the housing for streamlining the housing and preventing uplifting of the housing when lowered into water.
12. The device of Claim 11, wherein said fin means comprises a pair of fins, each fin having a generally triangular cross-section.
13. The device of Claim 11, wherein portions of said fins means attached along the bottom of said central portion form a channel communicating with an exterior of said housing means, and said bottom portion is provided with at least one opening in fluid communication with said channel for admitting water into said central portion.
14. The device of Claim 10, wherein said central portion defines a central chamber divided into a lower chamber and an upper chamber by a transverse separation wall, said lower chamber being in fluid communication with said at least one opening.
15. The device of Claim 14, wherein said upper chamber is configured for detachably receiving said means for freeboard measurement.

16. The device of claim 14, wherein said separation wall is provided with at least one aperture allowing fluid communication between said lower chamber and said upper chamber.
17. The device of Claim 1, wherein said means for freeboard measurement comprises a calibrated gauging stick having a measuring indicia and a strip of porous moisture-sensitive material attached thereto, said strip retaining, at least temporarily, a water mark upon contact with water.
18. A freeboard measuring device, comprising:
- an elongated housing having means for water ingress formed in a bottom thereof and a central chamber in fluid communication with said means for water ingress;
 - a means for freeboard measurement detachably mounted, at least in part, within said housing;
 - and
 - a stabilizing means secured above the housing means and extending transversely to a longitudinal axis of the housing means for stabilizing vertical orientation of said housing and facilitating resistance to wind and wave action, said stabilizing means comprising a cross bar secured above said housing and a transverse bar secured above said cross bar.
19. The device of Claim 18, further comprising a means for streamlining position of said housing in water.
20. The device of Claim 19, wherein said streamlining means comprises a pair of fins secured along sides and bottom of said housing, said fins having a generally triangular cross-section.
21. The device of Claim 20, wherein portions of said fins secured to the bottom of said housing define a channel for admitting water into said means for water ingress.

22. The device of Claim 19, wherein said cross bar is connected to the housing by a flexible connecting means, and said transverse bar is secured to the cross bar by a flexible attachment means.
23. The device of Claim 22, wherein said flexible connecting means comprises a pair of flexible chain links attached to the cross bar and the transverse bar.
24. The device of Claim 22, wherein said attachment means comprises a pair of flexible cables securing the cross bar to the transverse bar.
25. The device of Claim 22, wherein said transverse bar is adapted for detachable engagement with a sounding tape.
26. The device of Claim 25, wherein said transverse bar comprises a pair of plates retained in a parallel relationship by tightening members, and wherein said plates are configured to receive the sounding tape between the tightening members.
27. The device of Claim 26, wherein a swivel member is secured between the cross bar and the transverse bar to allow a limited swivel motion between the cross bar and the transverse bar.
28. The device of Claim 18, wherein said central chamber is divided into an upper chamber and a lower chamber, and wherein said lower chamber houses a means for preventing water turbulence within said central chamber.
29. The device of claim 28, wherein said means for preventing water turbulence comprise a packing of fibrous material positioned inside the lower chamber.
30. A freeboard measuring device, comprising:

an elongated housing having means for water ingress formed in a bottom thereof and a central chamber in fluid communication with said means for water ingress;

a pair of streamlined fins securely attached to and extending along elongated sides and bottom of the housing;

a means for freeboard measurement detachably mounted, at least in part, within said housing, said means for freeboard measurement comprising a calibrated gauging stick having a strip of porous moisture-sensitive material attached thereto, said strip retaining, at least temporarily, a water mark upon contact with water; and

a stabilizing means secured above the housing and extending transversely to a longitudinal axis of the housing for stabilizing vertical orientation of said housing and facilitating resistance to wind and wave action, said stabilizing means comprising a cross bar secured above said housing and a transverse bar secured above said cross bar by a swivel member to allow adjustment of the position of said cross bar in relation to the transverse bar.

31. The device of Claim 30, wherein said transverse bar is adapted for detachable engagement with a sounding tape.
32. The device of Claim 31, wherein said transverse bar comprises a pair of plates retained in a parallel relationship by tightening members, and wherein said plates are configured to receive the sounding tape between the tightening members.
33. The device of Claim 30, wherein said cross bar is connected to the housing by a flexible connecting means, and said transverse bar is secured to the cross bar by a flexible attachment means.
34. The device of Claim 33, wherein said flexible connecting means comprises a pair of flexible chain links attached to the cross bar and the transverse bar.